

LETTER FROM MRS. DALLAS YORKE.

62, CADOGAN PLACE.

Saturday, April 24th.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Yesterday I was angry with my doctor for forbidding my journey to Ambleside. To-day, when I ought to be starting, I have to acknowledge that he was right and that I have not the strength to undertake such an effort—but I shall be with you in spirit to-morrow very specially.

I should like to have spent a happy day with such an imposing number of students, and though I recognise that they must know far more than I do on all subjects connected with education, I feel that the penalties of age, which are manifold, have yet this one prerogative, which is summed up in the word Experience: that in the science of Experience both negative and positive I should have had something worth saying to you.

However, my message was not necessary for any of you—or I should have been allowed to deliver it—and I am thinking now chiefly of my own disappointment in missing this unique opportunity of coming into touch again with old friends and of making new ones.

I have been spending a winter alone at Bordighera and made friends with some of the many French religious educational communities which have settled there as the nearest *pied à terre* to France. I expected to find holy women of moderate attainments and limited aspirations as to their teaching. Instead of which they seem to me full of interest and zeal for all wider knowledge—which does not clash with traditional orthodoxy—and the influence of their own holy lives, the outcome of daily Eucharists and much interior prayer must remain a living power and inspiration to the pupils who, returning to their own homes in France, will find religion on the wane—at any rate among their menkind—and the spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice a diminishing quantity.

The spirit of love that reigns in these conventual schools

creates a wonderful atmosphere. The tenderness of the nuns to the children and the devotion the children give them in return is beautiful. A child who gives her teacher pain by waywardness is under the serious disapproval of all her companions.

Josset—the inaugurator of a wonderful new system of teaching music—spent Easter week at the convent of St. Joseph, Bordighera, where the nuns are making his method a speciality and are having wonderful results. This new “Josset method” is a revelation to me of how to manufacture musicians out of the poorest material. I intensely wanted to bring and introduce to you all the system as portrayed in a so-called “Harmonisphere,” a card which contains all the sounds in music and gives all possible combinations. It is difficult to explain, except verbally, but it is a simplification and unification of the science of music which *must* come to the fore in time.

I have many other things I should like to tell you, but I want you to get this letter on Sunday morning.

So will only add my warmest regards to you collectively and individually.—Believe me, yours devotedly,

F. DALLAS YORKE.

ON TEACHING FRENCH TO YOUNG CHILDREN.

By M. EVANS.

I FEEL that in this little paper it will be as well to deal only with French as taught to young children. After the age of twelve there is not so much discussion as to how a child shall be taught a foreign tongue. If, by that time, the pupil has a fairly good vocabulary and a pure accent she is able to begin the study of French literature and also some good Grammar, such as that by Taronse.

I.—In teaching French, I think the first point to be considered is a *correct pronunciation*. Some people have an idea that a good accent can be acquired later on, but this is a very grave mistake. A *good pronunciation* of a foreign

tongue is the all-important factor at the *beginning*. A good knowledge of French and a bad accent is almost as bad (I think it is quite as bad) as no knowledge at all. If this good pronunciation is mastered from the beginning, the teacher will, of course, save herself much trouble later on.

To ensure this correct pronunciation, a study of Phonetics will be found most useful. Children are excellent mimics, and there is no reason why they should not be able to pronounce every French word correctly from the beginning, if the teacher herself has pronounced them rightly. . . For those teachers who are not acquainted with the French Phonetic system I should advise a little book called "Elements of French Pronunciation," by Benjamin Dumville. Published by Dent.

To speak French correctly the pupil must master a list of sounds, . . . each sound having its corresponding symbol. French has a slightly different *organic* basis from English. This involves the development of certain muscles, enabling them to move easily in certain ways, and these trained muscles are aided by the sense of hearing, which has been trained with these from the beginning. Mr. Dumville sums up the fundamental organic differences of the two languages of French and English in the following formula:—

ENGLISH.	FRENCH.
1. Tongue more back.	1. Tongue more forward.
2. Tongue and other organs moved during the production of many of the long vowels.	2. Tongue and other organs always in the one position for one vowel.
3. Lips little used.	3. Lips very much used.

There are certain sounds which we English find more difficult to produce than others, they are the front vowels "i" and "é" as in "ni" and "été," and the back vowels "ou" and "au" as in "tour" and "peau;" the front rounded vowels "u" and "eu" as in "pu" and "peu," and the nasal sounds "en," "on," "in," and "un" as in "tante," "trompe," "vin," and "humble." A wall chart of these phonetic signs can be bought from Messrs. Truslove

and Hanson. I am certain that for those teachers who have not had the opportunity of studying a language in the country itself, a study of its phonetics will be most valuable and interesting. . . .

II.—The teacher must rouse an interest in the language she is going to teach, and to do this we must, of course, appeal to our pupil's imagination. We tell him delightful stories of France and the French people, we describe their habits and occupations and dress, and try to make the French child's life a reality to him. He must feel it is a living language and not the language of lesson-books. Teach him charming little French rounds and songs, and let it be as natural for him to sing these as it is for him to sing his English songs. There is a very charming book of French songs by Dalcroze, published by Augeners.

To increase the child's vocabulary I find *Dent's Wall Pictures of the Seasons* quite invaluable for class teaching. These pictures afford a wide scope for conversation, numbers of useful words can be learnt from one picture and sentences can, of course, be built up from these words. With children who have some knowledge of reading and writing, the words may be written on the blackboard and copied by the children in vocabulary note-books. I have found from experience that a small child will learn far more from pictures than in any other way. *Bué's Illustrated French Primer* makes a most charming little reader for Class I., the print is nice and large, and after the children have learnt all the words orally, they enjoy seeing the story in print; this is also a means of giving the children their first lesson on French spelling. I think it most important that the children should learn French poetry and prose by heart. Miss Violet Partington's little dramatised French fables are most charming, and the children love them. They are so arranged that even the little beginner of six can have a little part to act. It is marvellous what a lot of French the children learn in this way, and the sentences they learn are not stilted, but the idiomatical phrases of colloquial French. Reading French

fairy tales is a great help in teaching French. Some of Anderson's tales have been translated into French under the title of "*Contes d'Anderson*." I read the same story over and over again to the class, until they are so familiar with it that they listen in eager expectation for the familiar sentences and expressions.

When teaching from *Little French Folk* I think it is most important to read the little stories to the pupils several times before you allow them to read them out loud. However, before the story is read at all, a lesson, or several lessons, should be given on the chief nouns and verbs the story contains and the grammatical rules touched on. The little anecdote or story should not be left until the pupils can read it through quite fluently and make up fresh sentences on the same subject. It is most important that the little story should become a basis for conversation, and only when it is thoroughly known and understood should it be transcribed. I do not think these stories will be much use as a means of teaching the child French, if they are only translated into the mother tongue. I think it is important to teach the children a certain amount of French grammar before they go into Class III., and a good knowledge of verbs can, of course, be acquired from the Gouin lessons. Class II. children should be able to repeat and understand the use of the present, past, and future of *être* and *avoir*, and the four regular conjugations. If the children have some knowledge of these tense inflexions, the language becomes so much more reasonable to them, and as we all know, children will always appreciate what is compatible with reason.

DISCUSSION ON FRENCH PAPER.

In Classes II. and III. the teaching of French Grammar is impossible unless the children have a thorough knowledge of English Grammar.

Miss Whittall.—Writing in French is a great help to some children, even quite the youngest. They enjoy dictation of words in Class I. and short stories in II. and III.

Miss Parish.—Children under ten years of age should never see written French, as it makes the pronunciation so difficult.

The use of phonetics is a great help to some children, the only objection being that it is impossible to use the Gouin method at the same time. Some children cannot pronounce some words; it is thought the table of phonetics might be able to help them. They must be led up to the correct pronunciation of a whole word by taking the syllables separately from the table of phonetics. The teacher ought to know how to explain the exact pronunciation of words, and this book, *Elements of French Pronunciation*, by Dumville, shows how to do it.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE PHONETIC SYSTEM OF TEACHING TO READ.

MISS C. HENDERSON.

THE following are three advantages and three disadvantages of the phonetic method of teaching to read. After these, the points wherein these lie are spoken about.

1. Clear articulation is acquired from the beginning.
 2. The methods afford training in accuracy, as well as training of the senses.
 3. It encourages the children to use their own expression.
- On the other hand:—

- a. The process is slow. There are six reading books that are to be studied, and no time limit is given to any one.
- b. The sounds of the alphabet only are used, therefore the child who goes on to school has another alphabet to learn.

- c. The books are well illustrated, which makes them expensive. An apparatus must also be used that costs 28s., not including blackboard, chalks, paints, etc.

1. The first point of advantage is articulation. The children are taught to discover and compare the sounds they

use in speaking, and to notice the way in which the sounds are produced. This requires careful articulation of all the consonants and good and clear pronunciation.

2. The sounds are then put under one of three heads:—
 Breathed sounds,
 Vibrated sounds,
 Vowel sounds;

and these three groups of sounds are characterised in the books that follow, and in the building of words on the tabulating frame, by different coloured type: blue, black, and red. Whether it is a breathed or a vibrated sound, is drawn from the children, and the difference is not always evident. It is discovered by pressing the hands close to the ears while uttering the sound. The children by this are trained in accuracy. By tabulating the sounds they are trained in order and neatness.

The tabulating frame is made of green wood and folded in half. The *left-hand side*, being subdivided into compartments or "houses" by black grooves, is reserved for the consonant symbols, which are hung upon hooks provided for them, and arranged from left to right, to show the progression from the lips to the throat. The *right-hand side* is reserved for the vowel tables. The symbols in these are arranged in varying height to show the position of the tongue in the mouth. The tables are divided by a grooved shelf for Word Building. The symbols above the shelf represent the short vowel sounds and those below it the long vowel sounds, diphthongs and triphthongs.

3. As to the last contention that the children are not hindered from using their own powers of expression. The children build words for themselves, then go to the reading matter easily. The stories told in the books are about children and their animal pets. Interest in both is natural and draws out unaffected expression.

This takes us to the objections which are perhaps surface ones that can be cleared away.

- a. The progress is slow because a long time is spent on

the first book, *Steps to Reading*. This relates to classifying sounds, tabulating them and making words. It appears that the "steps" and the First Primer could be used simultaneously by P.U.S. children.

b. The second objection mentioned relates to those children who come into school not knowing the alphabet, which might be learned unconsciously when the sounds are being classified in the phonetic methods.

c. The cost of the books and of the apparatus remains a difficulty. The books are illustrated by Walter Crane, which gives them their value. The cost of the tabulating frame is from 4s. to 5s. more than the "Pussy Box" and letters, but it affords a disciplinary training, and, as was said before, helps to train in order and neatness.

A schoolmaster asks: "Why make such a mountain out of a molehill? Some children learn to read without knowing it." He inquires: "Should a baby who is learning to walk be taught to notice which limbs, joints, and muscles it uses?" It remains to be found out here whether this training by the phonetic method is for the lasting good of the children.

P.U.S. children might profit by the classification of sounds as a means of acquiring clear, good pronunciation. The aim of the phonetic method of teaching to read is "to train the children from the outset to observe for themselves and to use their own powers, so that in the learning to read they may develop their intelligence, and acquire habits of self-reliance."

The books chosen in the P.U.S. and the out-of-door Natural History and Geography do this for the children. It would not be, therefore, necessary for a student to spend too much time on the books. It would be interesting to try this. The methods have been adopted by many schools in London, with success it is said.

Teachers' handbooks are published that show how the books and tabulating frame must be handled.

(The method of phonetic teaching used in Miss Dale's school at Wimbledon has been taken here as an example.)

(Discussion and more information on this subject are invited.—ED.)

DISCUSSION ON THE PRECEDING PAPER.

The speaker felt that the phonetic method might be of use to a child who finds great difficulty in reading. The lessons are based on phonetics and the children do not see the words written until some time after they begin learning to read.

The children have to find out the sounds themselves. Another speaker said that the teaching is always in excess of the learning; the children do the least part of the work, and teaching reading phonetically interferes with spelling.

Somebody else said that spelling is a kind of gift, and she has found the reading box a great help to children who find a difficulty in this way; but it must only be used as an alternative—it is too easy alone.

The following suggestions were made:—

1. That a bad speller should copy out a page of something every day.
2. That he should learn so many words each day.
3. That he should make a list of the words he really does know, adding others every day, and that he should be encouraged to use these words.
4. If mistakes be made in reports, etc., the teacher should correct and the child copy them out.

DISCUSSION ON MISS LOVEDAY'S PAPER ON BRUSH-DRAWING.

The discussion of Miss Loveday's paper on Brush-drawing began about Perspective, a subject which had only just been touched. It was thought to be a good plan for small children to paint on glass held between the eye and the object.

Brush-drawing holds a very important place in education; nothing takes its place, but it should be supplemented by charcoal or pencil-work on paper as Brush-drawing alone

tends to inaccuracy. Charcoal work is preferable to black-board drawing because the first lines remain, whereas continual rubbing out is so bad for children.

Brushwork and Design, by Frank Steely, 5s. 6d., is an excellent book on the subject.

DISCUSSION ON PICTURE TALKS.

Miss Parish told us that the Art for Schools Association lends any pictures on receipt of a small deposit, which is returned when the pictures are sent back. She spoke also of the unconscious influence of a good picture on a child's mind and the effect it would have on his thoughts. Pictures have an influence which cannot be put into words, but which is nevertheless very real and very helpful.

It was generally felt that the Picture Talks in "L'Umile Pianta" had been a great help to students, and it was hoped that they would be continued.

Knights of Art, 6s., by Amy Steedman; *Seven Angels of the Renaissance*, by Wyke Bayliss; and *Sacred and Legendary Art*, 12s. 6d., by Mrs. Jameson, are three most interesting and helpful books. The first is fascinating for reading aloud to children, the second for reading to one's self, and the third tells all the legends and origins of the symbols of the saints and martyrs.

WORKING OF P.U.S. PROGRAMMES AND EXAMINATIONS.

DISCUSSION

(Opened by Miss Rothera and Miss Munro).

English History.—The chief difficulty in this subject seemed to be the bridging over of the distance between one period and another, occasioned by the removal of a pupil from a lower class to a higher one, and by the fact that pupils join the P.U. School at different times. But as this

difficulty *must* arise in every school, it was felt that it was quite unavoidable that these gaps in chronology should occur, and it was suggested that some time might be given once a week to reading up the chief facts in the period missed, or that a book, such as *Our Island Story*, might be given to the children to read for themselves.

Geography.—In this subject the students found it impossible to get through the work set in Classes II., III., and IV., and it was decided to ask Miss Mason that less work might be set for the term in these three classes.

Plutarch's Lives and *Latin* were not discussed, as papers were read later on these subjects.

Arithmetic.—Book suggested for mental work, *Blackie's Mental Arithmetic*.

Geometry.—It was found that the work in Class II. could not be done in the given time, and it was suggested that some of it might be taken in Arithmetic time, instead of a greater number of problems (as both are chiefly concerned with reasoning, and of equal value in this respect), as it is necessary to get the amount of geometry set for the term finished in order to continue the next term's work.

DISCUSSION ON SCOUTING.

On being asked where the signs were to be put, Miss Clendinnen said they put them wherever there might be a choice of ways.

Prisoners are made by touching or catching, as previously arranged. Miss Rothera said she had tried a map and compass race, telling the children to pace one hundred yards to the North and then to the North-east, for example, using compasses.

It was decided that when pacing is done by little children, the sum may be worked by the teacher.

A student suggested that those who live in towns, and were unable to scout, might let the children describe houses passed in their walk.

For indoor work children might be trained to describe the wall-papers, carpets, etc., in various rooms.

The Chairman said that boy scouts had to pass examinations, the first on making of knots, the next to run a mile in a certain number of minutes, another to be able to make a fire, using only two matches.

Flag-signalling can be used in scouting, and a paper chart showing signs and letters can be procured for 2d.

It was urged that the students should make practical use of Baden Powell's book, *Scouting for Boys*.

LATIN—THE USE OF SCOTT AND JONES.

BY MISS H. FOUNTAIN.

IN writing this paper I have tried to set forth the method which, so it seems to me, is intended by the writers of the book. And for this purpose I shall frequently refer to the Preface, which many of you have doubtless read. I advise everyone to re-read this Preface whenever a difficulty arises. It is worth while to study it carefully before beginning to use the book.

First of all it will be well to see what is the scope of this first Latin Course, and we find that it gives us:

(1) Nouns of the First, Second, and Third Declensions, Singular and Plural;

(2) Adjectives of both classes;

(3) Pronouns—Personal, Reflexive, and Interrogative;

(4) Verbs—Present Indicative of the four Conjugations Active and Passive, and Infinitive and Imperative Active only. Also the Present Imperfect and Future of the verb Sum.

(5) Prepositions—In, Ex, Ante, Ab, etc.

Preparatory Schools differ, I believe, in what they require from a boy of nine or ten when he enters the school, and though they may say the Declensions and the Four Conjugations Active Voice, I am sure they would be well satisfied if